

The Fire Fighter Gazette

Issue 14

October 1998

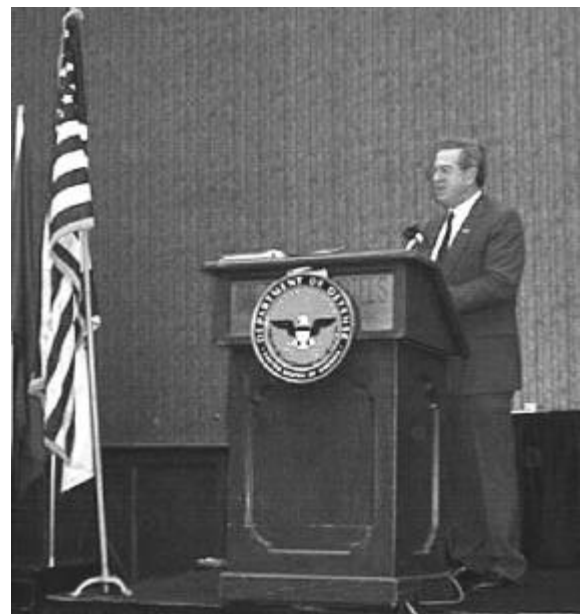
3rd Annual DoD Fire and Emergency Services Conference

The 3rd Annual Department of Defense Fire and Emergency Services conference was held in conjunction with the International Association of Fire Chief's conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Navy Fire Protection hosted this year's extremely successful event. **Bill Killen** (Chief of Fire Protection, US Navy, pictured) addressed the group during the "DoD day" on Tuesday. The schedule of events was tightly packed, beginning with sub-committee meetings on Friday, 11 September, and culminating with major air command meetings on Thursday and Friday the following week.

Here are some of the items that were discussed in the Quality Council meeting on Friday: Sometime in the next year or so we will be converting from DoDFIRS to NFIRS. The Navy will still retain responsibility for system oversight. *(Editor's note: It is critical that departments do not stop reporting in anticipation of the change to NFIRS – the information that is compiled, until the change, will be lost!)*

A selection is expected within weeks on the next generation of ARFF 1500 and 3000 gallon vehicles. Costs are estimated to be around \$480k and \$550k respectively. These units will be commercial acquisitions.

The new NFPA 1500 implementation guide should be in the field within the next thirty days. Training on this Air Force program will be offered in the CONUS (at the Air Force



Academy) and at two overseas locations, dates are to be announced.

It was announced that Air Force fire departments will be accredited in the future, much like our hospitals are today. The criteria for accreditation will come from the Commission on Fire Service Accreditation. Each department will have to be re-accredited every five years.

The Training Committee was tasked with two items during this conference — one was to assist the Quality Council with ideas that may be incorporated into the new Strategic Plan, and to develop a

(Continued on page 2)

It is critical that departments do not stop reporting in anticipation of the change to NFIRS.

Inside this Issue ...

Miniature Badge	2
Hazardous Duty Pay	3
Air Force Fire Fighters Won't Give Up The Fight	5
Why I Choose to Serve / People News	7

Fire Conference...

(Continued from page 1)

questionnaire that will be sent to all fire departments regarding the level of participation and implementation of the DoD Fire Fighter certification program. The Vehicle and Readiness committees also met, although as of this date, no meeting notes are available.

The weekend was reserved for attending IAFC events downtown, including opening ceremonies, seminars, and of course the display of new equipment and vehicles at the Exposition Center in Louisville. There was plenty of net-working going on, but one of the more interesting evening events was "Pioneer Day". Pioneer Day, put together by **Doug Courchene** and **Tom Smith** was intended to invite former Air Force fire folks to the annual conference, to swap stories and break bread. This year's event was the best attended yet. An informative and entertaining program included slides from portions of this world that this author cannot pronounce and pictures of strange looking fire fighting apparatus (O-11??). Lots of retired fire dogs, including some living legends, were in attendance. Perhaps the most memorable portion of the conference was the DoD awards banquet. Below I have listed all the nominees, with the winners in bold:

DoD Fire and Emergency Services Department of the Year:

Fort Lewis, Washington
Yokosuka, Japan
Camp Pendleton, California
Anderson AFB, Guam
Defense Supply Center, Richmond, Virginia
USCG, Kodiak, Alaska

Military Fire Fighter of the Year:

Corporal Damon Semingson, Fort Lewis, Washington
Sergeant Ramon Perez, Camp Pendleton, California
MSgt Todd Nielson, Kadena AB, Japan
Damage Controlman Second Jason Christian, Kodiak, Alaska

Civilian Fire Fighter of the Year:

Michael Kuk, Savanna Army Depot, Georgia
Douglas Say, Yokosuka, Japan
Patrick Bailey, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona
Thomas Ryan, Eglin AFB, Florida
Arnold Dail, Defense Distribution Depot, San Joaquin, CA
Donald Rossiter, Kodiak, Alaska

Heroism Award:

Mr. Alan Swearing, Fort Lewis, Washington
John Arruda, Bruce Wold, Ken Erickson, Mara Rhodes, Naval Shipyard, Puget Sound, Washington
Kenneth Hedlund, Camp Pendleton, California
Mark Smith, RAF Lakenheath, United Kingdom

Congratulations to each of the nominees and winners!!

Mini Badge

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) -- The Air Force phased out several items from its uniform inventory recently; however, some people are confused about exactly which items have been removed.

The items removed as of October 1 are the satin and oxidized finish belt tip and buckle; satin and oxidized finish badges and specialty insignia, both regular and miniature sizes; and the miniature highly polished and chrome finish badges and specialty insignia.

The only badges not affected by the phase out are the miniature wings, missile and fire protection badges and the security forces shield.

The miniature badges have been slated for phase out since November 1991 when the 90th Uniform Board ruled these badges were too small and difficult to see. Then in January 1995, the 94th Uniform Board met and re-evaluated the proposal and decided to set a phase out date of October 1, 1998.

"The phase out of these badges brought up questions on the proper wear of the miniature badges along with regular size badges," said Staff Sgt. Randy Larson, noncommissioned officer in charge of Air Force dress and appearance. "Basically, the miniature wings, missile and fire protection badges as well as the security forces shield are authorized to wear with any other regular size aeronautical, occupational or duty badge." Larson added that Air Force members are authorized to mix the regular size parachutist badge with the miniature wings, and the miniature missile badge may be worn with a regular size occupational badge.

If you have any questions about the badges, e-mail Larson at larsonr@hq.afpc.af.mil. (Courtesy of Air Force Personnel Center News Service)

Getting in touch with us...

As always, we would like to solicit your articles or questions, so here is how you can get in touch with us: 510 CES/CEF, 6202 Pine Drive, USAF Academy, CO 80840. Our phone numbers are: Commercial: (719) 333-2051, DSN 333-2051, and FAX: (719) 333-3740, DSN 333-3740. If possible, article submissions should include a Word For Windows file on floppy disk. Another way to get in touch with of us is through E-Mail:

piercyer.ce@usafa.af.mil

Using this method, you can attach your articles right to the message! We are also on the World Wide Web, and would love to have you visit us:

<http://www.usafa.af.mil/fire-dept>

Hazardous Duty Pay

Editors note: This information was extracted from a letter sent to the Pentagon regarding a FY2000 legislative proposal. As many of you know, the attempt to get Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay this year did not garner sufficient support.

Request action be initiated through a legislative proposal to change Title 37 USC, to authorize monthly hazardous duty incentive pay at the prescribed rate to service designated firefighters.

Firefighters are potentially exposed to a wide variety of hazardous conditions on every emergency response and each live fire training evolution. The military firefighter is potentially exposed to greater dangers than civilian firefighters when responding to military aircraft accidents laden with explosives and ejection mechanisms.

DoD firefighters work some of the longest hours (average 72 hours per week) as compared to other civilian counterparts and other military occupations. The extensive time spent on duty puts these firefighters in a position to be called to a hazardous condition at a moment's notice. The retention rate of Air Force firefighters is extremely low. We feel the low retention rate is caused by several factors to include long hours, high deployment tempo, and civilian opportunities with better pay for fewer hours worked. The hazardous duty incentive pay will compensate firefighters for the potential dangers of fire fighting, increase monthly pay, and potentially improve retention for our experienced firefighters.

Legislative Initiative
(Unified Legislation and Budgeting)

TITLE: Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay for Firefighters

ORIGINATOR: Air Force

DESCRIPTION: This proposal would add primary duty military firefighters (as identified by AFSC, MOS, or NEC) to the list of personnel authorized to receive hazardous duty incentive pay under 37 USC 301. Fire fighting is acknowledged as one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States, and it routinely exposes military members to a hostile and unpredictable environment, especially with the advent of advanced technologies involving dangerous chemicals and composite aircraft materials. The effects of this exposure can have immediate and long-term health effects on firefighters. Firefighters are required to operate in Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmospheres as defined by OSHA. Although protected by state of the art equipment (breathing apparatus, protective clothing, and personal alert devices), fire fighting is inherently dangerous. DoD firefighters experienced 391 injuries and four fatalities while operating at incidents, during the FY95 – FY98 period, as recorded by the Naval Safety Center. DoD firefighters are often called to assist local communities with large flammable liquid fires, wildland brush fires, and other emergency situations. Petroleum tank fires are extremely

dangerous, as are wildland brush fires. Additionally, DoD firefighters are faced with increased potential hazards when operating at accidents involving military aircraft laden with munitions and ejection mechanisms. Firefighters are exposed to a potentially hazardous situation daily during emergency response and fire fighting actions. Additionally, the nature of the occupation involves long duty hours with many unscheduled events, often requiring the member to abruptly awake from a sound sleep and transition to a life-threatening situation in a matter of minutes. These factors all contribute to one of the most potentially lethal and unforgiving operating environments currently in existence.

NUMBER OF PERSONNEL AFFECTED:

Air Force	3,675
Army	275
Navy	360
Marine Corps	903

Fire Training



FE Warren AFB Fire Department hosted live fire training for Laramie County Volunteer Fire Departments on 20 June 1998. Forty-five firefighters from four departments participated in search and rescue procedures, live fire evolutions, and propane tank fires. The training was conducted to evaluate new firefighters.

Provided by Greg Chesser, FE Warren AFB



Reo Speedwagon

Chief "Golden" Simmons, Air Force Academy Assistant Chief during the 60's and 70's, purchased an old "F" Model 1929 Reo Speedwagon, a chemical fire engine, from the Cedaredge, Colorado Volunteer Fire Department September 3, 1963. Chief Simmons painstakingly restored his Reo and constructed benches in the hose bed for his junior fire fighter's program. Chief Simmons offered the Speedwagon for fire prevention activities for many years on and around the Air Force Academy. Entering his engine in area parades, musters, and static displays, "Golden's Speedwagon" was a regular and favored entry. The Speedwagon was covered and parked in the Simmons' backyard under an old Spruce tree for several years after Golden passed away October 1, 1991. After watching it slowly weather and dry rot under an old Spruce tree where wind, rain, and snow found its way under a salvage cover, Mrs. Francis Simmons, in 1996, decided it was time to give Golden's Speedwagon a new lease on life. After contacting the Air Force Academy Fire Department and finding a very receptive organization, Mrs. Simmons signed over the title to the US Air Force.

The Speedwagon was moved to Fire Station 3 by an Air Force semi-tractor, lowboy trailer where immediate photo documentation of the disassembly processes began. Carousels of 35 mm color slides were taken as the Speedwagon's parts were removed, cataloged, measured, and placed on pallets as future templates and patterns. Most metal parts and brackets were savable, however, the white oak paneling, hose bed decking, and structural supports for the heavy brass chemical tank would have to be replaced. An original owners manual was acquired from James Rasmussen in Burlington, Wisconsin providing our resident power plant mechanic, MSgt Tom Woods, an excellent blueprint for the reconstruction of the in-line 6 cylinder Gold Crown engine. New electrical system, brakes, hoses, and a thorough engine rebuild was successful. Chief **Richard Duncan** maintained a constant injection of WD-40 into the cylinders and the crankshaft while the rest of the renovation was taking place, then when he moved his office to Fire Station 1, he took the Speedwagon with him to keep an ever vigilant command of the restoration activities. The Academy's motor pool took the stripped down frame in for primer and paint as Jesse Thompson, a local area antique apparatus painter, converted his garage into a red paint booth. The tedious reconstruction of the wooden body structures, panels, and decking from rough white oak was headed by, the Fire Department's resident aerial expert, Mr. **Ron Robbins**. As a fine cabinetmaker off-duty, Mr. Robbins applied his skills at a task requiring rigidity, strength, and a bit of flexibility producing a true work of art. The hand rubbed dark stain, stainless steel bolts, and brass screws keep the newly painted original metal where it's supposed to be and blends perfectly with the brass and black lines. With few exceptions, every Academy fire fighter and officer had a hand in the restoration project, with new recruits coming out of the wood-

work to help where needed. A true team effort, usually reserved for the fire ground was being applied on the apparatus floor for months on end.

At the 6th Annual Firefighters Reunion Picnic (1997), Mrs. Simmons, her sons, daughters, grandchildren, and other family members witnessed the unveiling of the Air Force Academy's new Engine-29. Though not completely renovated, but sparkling in the September sunshine, Engine-29 put some large lumps in otherwise parched throats. Parade ready and mechanically sound, Engine-29 is now entered in several parades, musters, fire department open houses, and static displays throughout the region. Mrs. Simmons and her family members are regular riders on Engine-29 and new members of the Air Force Academy Fire Protection family. Waving to the crowds, pushing the bell pedal, and remembering the earlier "Golden" years, Mrs. Simmons knows the Air Force Academy will have a uniquely qualified fire prevention icon going into the next millennium.

Article by Tracy Goodale, USAF Academy, Assistant Chief for Training

Photography Club Alert



The Air Force Office of Special Investigations is investigating several individuals and companies involved in fraud by misrepresentation. These individuals and companies have targeted military personnel for the purpose of enticing them to participate in a discount photography club. Victims are selected from lists purchased by these individuals such as US West phone company listings. Victims are first contacted by a tele-marketer who claims the victim is a prizewinner. Arrangements are then made to deliver the prize.

Sales personnel, trained to represent themselves as being affiliated with Kodak, arrive at the Victim's home, as arranged, and present a money saving package, to include food coupons, gifts, electronic equipment, vehicle rebates, and other varied discounts. However, no gifts are presented at this first meeting, but victims are hard pressed to take advantage of the photography club offer. Many of the items offered as "free" involve small charges and are often used and possibly stolen.

Victims are usually enticed to enter into contracts valued at between \$1,500 and \$2,000, paid by monthly installments over 18-24 months. These individuals have many sales personnel throughout the United States with connections to the U.S. Military and may stay at on-base lodging facilities.

Should you have contact with anyone trying to sell you a photography club package over the phone, or in your home, beware. Call AFOSI Detachment 404 at 333-3305 to report these individuals. The money you save could be yours, your neighbor's or your subordinate's.

Air Force Fire Fighters Won't Give Up The Fight

By TSgt Ginger SchreitmueLLer, Public Affairs Office Patrick AFB, Florida

Airman 1st Class **Gerard Reheiser Jr.** takes aim at an encroaching line of flame, seeing this threat to a stranger's



home as a personal affront. This is one building the fire won't claim, not if this Patrick Air Force Base firefighter has anything to do with it. Reheiser is among the 45th Space Wing firefighters who helped defeat the wildfires searing scars across Florida's Brevard County. He, like the entire Air Force fire-fighting force who supported the efforts, didn't intend to give up. "I was two days away from graduating high school when a fire destroyed my home," said the Florida native. "What the flames didn't destroy, the heat from the fire did. I can't describe the feeling of loss; it was the worst feeling in the world. Walking around looking at what happened, I knew right then and there that I wanted to be a firefighter. If I could just keep someone else from ever having to feel that way, from losing everything they had, then it would be worth it," he said.

According to Patrick's Fire Chief, firefighters from Patrick and Cape Canaveral Air Station were called in by the Brevard County Fire Department when flames erupted in the northern section of the county June 27. "Since Patrick sits in the center of Brevard, the station is often called on to lend a hand to county firefighters," said Patrick's Fire Chief **Wayne Dukes**. "With hundreds of fires scorching the state, and county firefighters already battling flames in other areas, the sparks in northern Brevard stretched local firefighters thin," he added. Firefighters from the two installations supported the mutual-aid request on a non-stop basis until the fires were extinguished July 5. Despite the intense flames, volatile embers and uncontrollable firestorms raging in northern Brevard County, the wing's firefighters weren't going to quit. After three days of fighting the fire war in Mims, the crews were focused on winning. "We haven't won the war yet but we've

won a few battles," said **Jim Mial**, a driver/operator from Patrick's Fire Department. "We saved some homes from going up. We knew we couldn't knock down all the fires, so we tried to keep it from taking as many homes as we could." Mial describes one battle he and fellow Patrick firefighter, **John Reed**, won in a wooded area of Mims, June 30. The duo was dispatched by the county task force "to an area where the road ends and a dirt trail begins." With flames less than 100 feet from a home, the two set in and began the fight. "We put ourselves between the fire and the house, and took aim with the hoses to force the fire around the building," said Mial. "I'm standing in front of the house and the flames finally go around. It was pretty close there for awhile, but we saved the home." Close is an underestimation of the inches between the flames and the home. Walking around to the backyard, the firefighters find the remnants of two boats the owner had parked only a few feet from the home. Being in the middle of a firestorm is a new experience for most of Patrick's 48 firefighters. The first-hand experience they gained from this fire-fighting effort will make them all better firefighters, according to the department's training chief. "Fire fighting is 25 percent academic and 75 percent practical," said **Joseph A. Gianantonio**, Patrick's Assistant Fire Chief for Training. "We're getting a chance to give back to the community and help protect lives and property, while gaining excellent training and readiness experience, too." Though the fire department holds periodic exercises and drills to hone their fire-fighting techniques and skills, first-hand exposure is invaluable, said the firefighters. "Most of these guys have only seen pictures of fires like these in their training manuals," said Reed. "Now they'll be



able to tell 'war stories' with the best of us. They'll have learned more in one day out on the fire line than they ever did in five days of exercises and drills." Despite the devastation and losses, the lessons learned are proving a powerful

(Continued on page 6)

Florida Fires

(Continued from page 5)

experience, said Gianantonio. "These guys were exposed to things they only heard about. This will give them a greater



range of experience and knowledge than most Air Force firefighters will ever know. This is reinforcing all they've learned. Ultimately, it will make them better firefighters for the Air Force," he said. For many, this experience made a

lasting impression about how swift and unforgiving a fire can be. "We were in the middle of a hot spot, with helicopters dropping water all around us, working hard to keep the fire from jumping across (U.S. Highway 1)," said **Jose A. Fernandez**, a lieutenant with the Patrick department. "We had our backs to the highway and were doing what we could to protect the homes. Looking around you could see how fast it's moving. One structure is completely untouched, while another home right next door is gutted. Yet, in the front yard of that home there's a Mercedes-Benz untouched." The Air Force crews worked as part of a county task force, side-by-side with fellow firefighters from across the county, state and the nation. Reporting in to a staging area, crews began their eight-hour shifts receiving taskings for different areas along the fire's path. Sometimes they were given street directions, but since the majority of the homes were in secluded areas it was often a case of following the flames. "You get an area to cover and you start by driving down the paved road until it ends. Then you hang a right on a dirt road and keep going until you see the fire," said Reed. "You stop, put it out and move on to the next one. When you run out of water you go back to the re-supply area, fill up and head back in." After pushing the flames back for eight hours, the crew waited for the next Patrick team. Once their fellow wing firefighters arrived, the tired crew didn't head home right away. They had just spent hours breathing in near-toxic levels of smoke and ash. When you combine the air quality with temperatures boiling around the mid- to upper-90's in central Florida, crews need some quality "rehab" time. Paramedics at the staging area kept an eye on firefighters coming off the

line to watch for signs of heat exhaustion and dehydration. Crews got out of their gear, cooled down and unwound, while paramedics monitored their blood pressure and ensured the sweat-soaked firefighters drank plenty of fluids. When you tack an hour of rehab on to their day, and an additional 30 minutes drive to and from base, Patrick's firefighters pulled 10-plus hours each shift of the fire war. "Everyone from the senior management to the first-term airmen at the station got a chance to go out to the fire sites," said Staff Sgt. **Deyon James**. "You couldn't stop them from volunteering to go next. We're a pretty dedicated bunch." Despite a look of physical exhaustion, a certain enthusiasm filled the station's break room like the smell of the fire circling around the returning crew. The firefighters staffing the station house compared notes with those just back from the fire site. Though the fires in Mims are out, Patrick's crews are ready if called upon again, said Dukes. "Florida and Brevard County aren't out of the fire-danger-zone, yet," said Patrick's Fire Chief. "There are still 'hot spots' in some of the wooded areas which could flare back up without notice. Until we get a few days of good rain the dry conditions will continue and it will only



take one spark to ignite more fires." Whether in northern Brevard, the southern section of the county or Patrick's backyard, the wing firefighters are ready to answer the call. Every hour someone checks the news reports to see if there's potential fire trouble somewhere in the county. No one wants to miss the chance to get out on the line, one more time. It's that certain something that makes a firefighter a unique breed, said Gianantonio. "There's a camaraderie most people will never experience," he said. "Even on a good day, it's a tough job."

Why I choose to serve

The author of this is AIC Chad Rood, assigned to Charleston's Fire Protection Flight, 437th CES. Amn Rood originally wrote the article for a Year of the Enlisted essay contest--and won. I think you will be impressed!

A few years ago I was still a somewhat new face around the Fire Department. I always thought I had a pretty good idea about why I served. All of those ideas were changed when the assistant chief walked into the room with that look that everyone knew. He needed someone to fill a slot for a temporary duty assignment. We knew the looks because we see it often. Although this time the look had a bit of a concern attached to it. "Staff Sergeant Doe was injured over in Tazar, Hungary and we need an emergency replacement for him as soon as possible," he said. I looked around the room at the usual faces. One who had just gotten married, one who had a baby and another who was expecting a child shortly. A few more stood in the back, they were the ones who usually got hammered, so to speak, on these type of assignments. I put my hand in the air thinking, "Oh they won't send me, I'm still in upgrade training." By Saturday morning I was climbing aboard a flight to Frankfurt, Germany, which would ultimately get me to Hungary.

Upon arrival at my European destination, I met all the other fire fighters, only knowing one of them, a master sergeant. I soon realized I was one of only a few airmen in the whole station. Regardless of rank we were all sent to the same place. They accepted me as a member of a team, sent to the middle of a former communist country, to do a job, or as the United Nations looks at it, to stabilize a peace force that had been implemented by a past operation.

Now prior to this deployment, I was oblivious to what was actually going on over there. A new respect for freedom and heritage was embedded in my soul. One that, unless you have truly "been there, done that and got the T-shirt," can you really feel the intense pride and self confidence that you, as a young person, are part of a winning team. Not the kind of team that takes home the trophy at the end of the game, but one that is part of something so great and extravagant.

These days we are faced with mounting mobility requirements, less than average pay for the work we do, and many holidays away from home, but on the grand scale of things, we are creating a better tomorrow for people who can't do it for themselves. Along the same lines we are forging ahead with the same values and morals that past veterans of all wars, conflicts, and operations have put down for us to follow and improve upon. Most people do not realize how young the United States is compared to some European countries. In only a few short centuries, the United States has sprinted to the needs of the world, all along growing closer and closer to becoming what we are now, and keeping our nation free for the future.

So why do I serve in today's Air Force? I can sum it up in a few short words: pride; honor; courage; integrity; and commitment to follow through with something you have started. This may sound like a recruiting commercial from a little piece of all the services. But it is simply how a person joined the Air Force for a steady job, a little college money and best of all free travel, but soon realized, to be part of this team you have to see the big picture and give a little more than just a days work.

People News

Item of information for the world's greatest fire protection team:

Mr. Donald Striejewski, (*Stress Ski*), currently the Assistant Chief for Technical Services at Robbins AFB, has been selected to be the Fire Chief at Dover AFB following my retirement on 30 October. Don is scheduled to arrive here around 1 October for some overlap. He brings a great background, including training and technical services as well as an operations guy from the beginning. I certainly hope each of you will provide him with any support he may need in getting fully spun-up on AMC procedures.

I enjoyed seeing a lot of you at the IAFC in September, but for those of you that couldn't make it there, please except my thanks for any and all help you have provided me over the last 30 plus years. It's been one hell of a ride, but real enjoyable. I know that each of you will continue to fight the good fight, and not let the naysayers prevail.

Raymond P. Porter

Some people dream of success, others stay awake and make it happen!

George F. Hall, former Chief, Fire Research Group for the Air Force Research Laboratory, is now with HQ AF-CESA/CEXF (Air Force Fire Protection) as a Fire Protection Program Manager. CMSgt (ret) Hall brings years of fire protection experience to the staff.

I want to take this opportunity to formally congratulate **Joe Gregorio** on his selection for promotion to Assistant Chief, Operations, "A" shift. Congratulations Joe.

James U. File
Chief, Fire Protection
FE Warren AFB, WY

Also from FE Warren AFB:

GS-7, **Martin Hackard** announced his retirement effective 3 July 1998, after 30 years of Federal Service.
GS-6, **David Merchant** was promoted to GS-7.

Mr. Lewis Everett of the Lackland AFB Fire Department is the first person to be certified as Fire Inspector III through the Career Development Course Program. Although Mr. Everett was eligible to be grandfathered to Fire Inspector III, he elected to take the course and did an excellent job putting the performance test book together. He did his home work, did good research and demonstrated an outstanding knowledge and application of the National Fire Codes. Congratulations are in order for Mr. Everett.

Submitted by Hugh Pike